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The Lived Experiences of Students in Learning with Technology in Noveleta Senior High School: A Descriptive Phenomenological Research Study

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Abstract

This phenomenological descriptive research study explores the lived experiences of students in learning with technology at Noveleta Senior High School. The study reveals that students encountered challenges such as addiction and distraction while using technology, including exposure to adult content. However, technology emerged as a valuable tool for learning. Students found that utilizing educational applications enabled them to advance their studies and enhance their learning experience. Despite the potential drawbacks, students employed control mechanisms to avoid distractions and addiction. They demonstrated discipline and practiced effective time management strategies to regulate their technology usage. Furthermore, students actively sought alternative activities to engage in, redirecting their

focus away from entertainment on social media platforms. The findings underscore the duality of technology's impact on students' learning experiences. While addiction and distraction can pose challenges, students recognize technology's potential as a transformative learning tool. By utilizing educational applications and implementing control mechanisms, students leverage technology to enhance their academic pursuits. This research study sheds light on the complex interplay between technology, student experiences, and academic advancement. It highlights the importance of promoting responsible technology use among students and the potential for technology to support and facilitate learning in educational settings.

Keywords: Learning with Technology, Addiction and Distraction, Educational Applications, Control Mechanisms, Time Management

Introduction

Modern technology is remarkable for its ability to make information accessible to everyone and is trendy due to the numerous benefits it offers. Integrating technology into education brings advantages such as increased learning time, higher test scores, cost reduction, and enhanced motivation. The growing popularity of technology reflects ongoing efforts to develop innovative solutions that can improve people's lives, regardless of their socioeconomic status (Rahardja *et al.*, 2019) ^[14].

In Africa, mobile phones have become ubiquitous, with basic smartphones being particularly influential among younger users. According to Porter (2016) ^[9], more students are bringing internet-capable devices to school, which can disrupt classes when phone calls cause interruptions with ring tones. Both teachers' and students' use of mobile devices in the classroom can disrupt sleep due to issues like harassment, excessive time spent on social media, and late-night calls. Oliveira *et al.* (2018) ^[10] suggest that technology promotes student autonomy as they take charge of their learning materials, albeit with reduced verbal communication with professors and peers. To address this limitation, promotive communication between co-learners is crucial for students to learn from one another in a way that supports and encourages others' attempts to accomplish activities in order to achieve the group's objectives (Johnson & Johnson, 1999) ^[4].

Philippines is ranked among the lowest in the world for Internet bandwidth, Internet accessibility, and information sharing (PIDS, 2016) ^[8]. This limitation hampers access to Chrome and other learning materials, negatively impacting the efficiency of accessing information. In Noveleta Senior High School, students' use of technology can either contribute to positive or negative academic performance, depending on their responsible usage. When utilized correctly, technology has the potential to enhance learning experiences and improve studying. As Albert Einstein once said, "It has become obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity."

The researchers conducted this study to explore how technology influences the learning experiences of students in Noveleta Senior High School. Technology can be utilized efficiently for learning or become a source of distraction. Students have the opportunity to maximize the benefits of technology in their educational journey by using it responsibly and effectively.

Objectives of the Study

This research specifically aims to (1) determine the experiences of students in learning with technology; (2) explore the various ways in which technology facilitates efficient learning for students; and (3) identify the control mechanisms employed by students when using technology for various purposes.

Materials and Methods

The research employed the Phenomenology methodology, focusing on understanding individuals' experiences with technology for learning. Through interviews, the researchers aimed to delve into the respondents' unique encounters and perspectives regarding the use of technology in their educational journey. The study targeted twelve grade 11 students from Noveleta Senior High School as participants for the interviews. Convenience sampling was employed as a practical approach for selecting the students based on accessibility and availability. By utilizing this sampling method, the researchers could efficiently gather data and gain insights into how these particular students experienced technology in their learning process.

To guide the interviews and ensure the research objectives were met, a self-made interview schedule was developed. This interview schedule comprised a carefully crafted set of questions and topics that aimed to elicit detailed responses from the participants. The schedule was designed to align with the research goals and facilitate a comprehensive exploration of the participants' experiences with technology in learning. By using a self-made interview schedule, the researchers had the flexibility to adapt and refine the questions during the interviews as needed, enabling a more tailored and dynamic data collection process.

Following the interviews, the qualitative data obtained was subjected to thematic analysis. This analysis method involved identifying recurring patterns, themes, or categories within the data and interpreting their meaning. By applying thematic analysis, the researchers aimed to uncover and understand the central themes that emerged from the participants' experiences. This analytical approach allowed for a systematic examination of the qualitative data, enabling the researchers to gain valuable insights into how technology impacted the learning experiences of the grade 11 students in Noveleta Senior High School.

Results and Discussion

There were three themes that occurred on the experiences of students in learning with technology. Students said that they experienced addiction and distraction. It was stated by Respondent 1, *"I became deeply engrossed in playing games to the point where it hinders my ability to efficiently complete household chores. Unfortunately, this sometimes leads to my mother feeling frustrated."* Respondent 7, *"Due to my excessive use of social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, I find myself easily distracted and struggle to maintain focus on my schoolwork. Additionally, this prolonged use of technology has ingrained certain mannerisms in me that persist to this day."* and Respondent 12, *"Technology, such as online games, has the potential to be addictive and distract me from studying. Similarly, entertaining platforms like TikTok and Facebook serve as additional distractions that hinder my ability to focus on schoolwork."*

Being addicted and distracted is hard for the students as they

mention that they can't focus on their school works and study because they can resist the compulsion they feel if they use the technology. Addiction is the constant use of something or action that becomes compulsive and gets in the way of daily life (Rozgonjuk *et al.*, 2018) [12]. Social media is where many young people spend most of their time with their peers, but most people don't see this as a problem (Ward *et al.*, 2017) [16].

The easy access of internet leads students in viewing adult contents which is a sad reality. This was stated by Respondents 2, *"I neglected my body due to excessive technology use, which has negative effects on my well-being. This includes watching explicit content on platforms like TikTok and pornography, further contributing to the negative impact."* and Respondent 4, *"I engage in prohibited activities, such as accessing explicit content on the Dark Web, and spend excessive time playing online games like Mobile Legends, Roblox, League of Legends, and Rules of Survival."*

The rapid growth of the adult content industry is fueled by increased Internet access and advancements in technology. Streaming media, such as videos that can be viewed without downloading, is a prominent example. However, students who become attached to this content may face significant mental health issues due to their obsession with viewing inappropriate material through technology. It is crucial to address this problem promptly and provide solutions to help them break free from this harmful obsession (Wilkinson, 2017) [17].

On the positive side, students said that technology is a help as a tool for learning. Respondent 3 stated that *"The way that I can just review pretty easily with the use of technology, and I can also just search up any questions I want and I can just get the answers I wanted in just a few seconds and few clicks which is very helpful for me as a student."* Respondent 9 added, *"The way that I can easily get information and answers by using google is one of the important functions I've experience in using technology."* Moreover, the statement of Respondent 10 *"The search engine is one of the important functions of it since it gives a lot of benefits to me as a student. It is also magnificent since it has a lot of purpose in studying. I just search for the answers without even reviewing it or reading it just searching and writing it down."* and Respondent 11, *"Life becomes easy with the internet because information is just a click away. It can improve knowledge."* shows that technology has a big part in students' learning experience.

Students leverage the platforms and tools offered by technology to actively apply and implement their learning concepts. The integration of technology in education offers numerous benefits, provided that students utilize it effectively and responsibly. According to Jeng *et al.* (2010) [3], when students utilize technology appropriately, they can reap a multitude of advantages. This includes enhanced engagement, access to a wealth of educational resources, opportunities for collaborative learning, personalized learning experiences, and the development of digital literacy skills. By leveraging technology effectively, students can harness its potential to optimize their educational journey and foster a more dynamic and interactive learning environment.

On the various ways in which technology facilitates efficient learning, grade 11 stated that the use of educational application is a tool of great help in their academics'

experience. It was stated by Respondent 1, *“Using technology, I can easily access new information that I'm unaware of. This greatly aids my learning process, especially when I encounter unfamiliar topics at school. Additionally, I have utilized Brainly to obtain specific answers I sought.”* and Respondent 11, *“Everyday life becomes easier with the use of smartphones, laptops, and computers, which enhance accessibility to my studies. The availability of learning apps has significantly simplified the learning process, making it much more convenient for me.”* Sometimes, student rely more on using application than on their critical thinking skills as what Respondent 12 stated, *“I rely on AI tools like ChatGPT and Brainly for studying, often more than my own creative thinking, as they provide significant assistance during school.”*

Technology is widely used globally, and Educational Applications are currently popular due to their user-friendly nature for students. These apps benefit everyone, particularly students and teachers. They aid teachers in engaging students, enhancing motivation, and improving performance (Kocakoyun & Bicen, 2017) [6]. Students can easily manage lessons, assignments, and projects with the help of these apps, obtaining the necessary knowledge (Aljraiwi, 2017) [1]. Proper utilization of these applications significantly enhances students' understanding of challenging classroom lessons.

The second theme occurred on the various ways in which technology facilitates efficient learning is advancement of knowledge. Students can discipline themselves to learn in advance on the things that they are pursuing. This was stated by Respondent 2, *“Technology, particularly the internet, plays a crucial role in providing easy access to information, aiding in advanced studying. Moreover, it has significantly improved human lifestyle by making tasks easier and enabling us to accomplish things previously impossible.”* and Respondent 9, *“Technology has simplified my school life by allowing me to easily search for subject lessons on my smartphone and engage in advanced learning. With the accessibility of literature materials and video lessons, I can proactively study lessons ahead of time and fill in any knowledge gaps from my elementary years.”* However, the statement of Respondent 4 shows that life is boring sometimes due to technology *“When I have assignments, I proactively study ahead in anticipation of the upcoming lesson. However, I occasionally find life boring due to excessive reliance on technology.”*

Although technology can have negative impacts on students, when used properly, it significantly enhances their academic life. Responsible and mindful usage allows students to benefit from access to abundant information, educational resources, and interactive learning platforms. They can expand their knowledge, foster critical thinking, and develop digital skills. Technology also enables communication and collaboration, connecting students with peers and experts globally, promoting broader perspectives and global awareness. By utilizing technology responsibly, students optimize their academic journey and unlock their full potential.

Advanced learning addresses the specific educational and personal growth requirements of advanced learners as they strive for excellence. These needs can be observed through three key aspects. Firstly, advanced students benefit from educational interventions that emphasize deliberate practice (Ericsson *et al.*, 1993) [2]. Engaging in this kind of activity

voluntarily can greatly benefit their learning process. Secondly, it is crucial for them to thoroughly comprehend and analyze lessons in advance, as generic educational exercises may not be effective for students who are already advanced in their education (Kalyuga, 2007) [5].

For the control mechanisms employed by students when using technology for various purposes, the first theme occurred was discipline and time management. This was stated by Respondent 6, *“I use technology for around three hours each day, and I take a one to two-hour break afterward to rest my eyes. If I need to use it for longer periods, I make sure to take regular breaks while doing homework.”* and Respondents 7, *“I practice time management to control my smartphone usage, ensuring that I discipline myself daily due to the numerous distractions it presents.”*

In a student's life, time management is crucial due to the numerous tasks they need to handle. Students in today's competitive era prioritize finding effective time management solutions to achieve high performance (Kumar & Aithal, 2019) [7]. It is advisable for students to start practicing time management early in their academic journey (Valle *et al.*, 2016) [15]. Time management is considered a form of self-management that emphasizes knowing which tasks to prioritize, optimizing efficiency, and understanding the ideal timing for specific tasks (Savino, 2016) [13].

The next theme is finding alternatives. While it is true that distractions and addictions can be prevalent when using high technologies, students can avoid them by engaging in alternative activities. This was stated by Respondent 10, *“I engage in household chores and play sports such as badminton and table tennis to ensure my time is not solely focused on technology. These activities provide a balance and help me avoid excessive reliance on technology.”* And Respondent 3, *“Whenever I get distracted, I always prioritize finding ways to study instead of getting engaged in entertainment on my phone.”*

In the technology era, it benefits students to have control over their personal choices. When distractions arise, they can either pursue alternative activities or opt to study using technology. Typically, the most successful students are those who demonstrate focus and excel in classroom engagement (Ormrod, 2006) [11].

Conclusions

Based on the findings, students become addicted to and distracted by technology, primarily due to online games and social media. As a result, they struggle with learning and studying at school as they devote the majority of their time to playing online games and engaging in social media activities. However, technology also plays a role in helping them improve their academic performance through advanced studying techniques.

Students utilize educational applications to enhance their learning abilities in subjects they find challenging. Additionally, technology serves as a convenient tool for searching information that they are unfamiliar with, offering them significant convenience. Despite the challenges associated with technology usage, it still provides numerous benefits for studying and learning. Students also employ control mechanisms to effectively manage their technology usage and allocate their time wisely. These measures enable them to maintain self-discipline and ensure efficient use of technology in order to properly manage themselves.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the researchers offer the following recommendations:

Parental guidance: Parents should support and guide their children in using technology responsibly. Proper guidance can have a positive influence on children's use of technology, helping them utilize it correctly and responsibly.

Proper use of educational technology: Students should use educational technology appropriately and with discipline. Doing so can significantly benefit their academic performance, enhancing their learning experience.

Support programs for addiction and distraction: Students should attend support programs that address technology addiction and distraction. These programs can help students gain control over their technology usage and prevent addiction. They will teach students how to use technology properly and manage addictive tendencies.

Utilize technology for academic improvement: Students should continue to leverage technology to enhance their academic performance. They can develop effective studying strategies, such as searching for additional resources online or watching relevant educational videos. Proper time management, with an organized timetable, allows students to allocate time efficiently for different tasks.

Minimize distractions: Students can uninstall or disable notifications from distracting apps. This action helps maintain focus on studying and prevents unnecessary disruptions caused by social media and online games, ultimately leading to improved academic performance.

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